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Chapter 6 - Section 2

Big Spring Presbyterian Church - Big Spring on Elk

The Big Spring Community was settled by people of refinement and culture from east of the Allegheny Mountains. They found no building in which to meet and worship, but they met in the homes of the neighborhood for prayer and for preaching services when a minister would visit the neighborhood. There is no written record to show who first preached in this community, which adjoined the Mingo Flats in Randolph County. The sessional records of Mingo Presbyterian Church mention that active measures were taken by the session and pastor of that church to establish an appointment at Big Spring, in Pocahontas County, in 1886. Elder John Moore was appointed to confer with the people of Big Spring community concerning a monthly appointment at that place. Col. A. C. L. Gatewood was appointed by the session to take charge of raising the salary. Elder Moore was to assist him in that work, and they were asked to raise fifty dollars. The first service was held June 27, 1886.

Rev. W. S. P. Bryan was at that time pastor of the Mingo church, also Tygart Valley and Beverly Churches. Rev. Bryan received a call to another church, and the pastoral relations with Big Spring were dissolved. The last service for Big Spring was held May 29, 1887.

A petition was drawn up petitioning Presbytery for a church at Big Spring and signed by the following persons, who formed the charter membership of the church:

Pocahontas County

J. W. McCalpin from the Huntersville Church
Mr. & Mrs. M. E. Slanker
Mr. K. P. Cameron
Mrs. Annie Varner
Mrs. Rhea from the Mingo Church
Mrs. Mary Gatewood of Warm Springs
Mrs. N. P. Vandervort
A. C. L. Gatewood
Annie McCalpin
Mary L. McCalpin
Willie Vandervort
Fannie Vandervort
Myrtle Varner
M. C. Gatewood
B. F. Hamilton
Mrs. Wm. A. Wooddell
C. W. Showalter

Presbytery, having granted the request the Big Spring church was formally organized by the Rev. J. M. Sloan, evangelist of Greenbrier Presbytery, on August 25, 1894. Mr. J. W. McCalpin and Col. A. C. L. Gatewood were elected, ordained and installed ruling elders, and B. F. Hamilton, deacon. The church was named "Big Spring" by vote of the congregation.

The lot for the church was laid out and given by Col. A. C. L. Gatewood.

In 1895 this church was first reported to the General Assembly as having nineteen members. In 1896, it was reported as vacant.

This church, which has always been associated with other churches in home mission groupings, has had the ministerial services of the following ministers:

Rev. R. M. Caldwell
" H. W. McLaughlin
" G. W. Nickell
" Asa D. Watkins
" Walter W. Bain
" F. W. Gray
" W. P. Gibbs

And from 1921, Rev. O. N. Miles, who is the pastor at the present time.

At the present time the church has only one elder, Mr. E. S. Gatewood. There are services at this church twice each month and the membership is about twenty persons.

They have Sunday School each Sabbath and the enrollment is thirty.

There is no Woman's organization in this church.

Information:

Records of the Historical Foundation - Montreat, N. C.
Session book of the Big Spring Church.